

One Extra Page ... So Much to Say

As you have probably already noticed, this edition of *Tzedakah Times* is a little longer ... but only by one page. Those who know me well will say it is because I am just overly verbose! However, and honestly, I came to the realization that so much has happened in the world since the last newsletter that two pages just was not enough space.

Multiple pages could be spent on the ramifications of Ariel Sharon's stroke. Questions such as "how might this affect the *"fragile peace"* in the Middle East?" and "does this bring us closer to the return of the Lord?" have been asked over the last few weeks. Delicate questions which require careful answers*, and most of which cannot be answered. All we can do now is pray and share the truth of Messiah Jesus with the Jewish people.

Additional pages also could be spent detailing the people I have met over the last few months who are longing for their Jewish friends and family to come to faith in Messiah Jesus. Instead, I will limit myself to three who have recently come to my attention and to my daily prayers.

Don** is in an ideal situation. He married into a Christian home that is devout and faithful. His in-laws love and pray for him daily. They witness to him as often as possible and while Don professes a faith about Jesus, the family does not believe that he has a personal faith in Jesus as Lord. Eternity is at stake for Don and all because of the difference in the meaning of two prepositions.

Gary** is a World War II veteran who defended the United States in the Pacific theater. While he was in the service, he experienced anti-Semitic acts and words at the hands of supposed Christians. Actions which happened over 60 years ago have made Gary angry and resistant to the witnessing efforts of a wonderful man who has spent many years living a real Christian life in front of him. Please pray for Gary as his time on earth is probably very limited.

June** has found herself in an unusual situation. She has come into the proximity of a church that is determined to witness and see her come to faith in Messiah Jesus. She is resistant but her resolve is beginning slowly to weaken as a church determined to make an eternal difference in her life is living out love and Jesus in front of her.

Please pray for Don, Gary, and June and for their friends and family who are witnessing to them. And as always, and especially now, pray for the peace of Jerusalem (Psalm 122:6).

Amy Downey

*One Christian response to Sharon's health situation and what this could mean is now available on the BMAWeb website at http://www.bmaweb.net/news/060110_opin_downey_sharon.htm.

**All names have been changed to protect the individual's privacy.

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE . . .

**Jewish-Christian Dialogues – Good Idea?
Orthodox Jewish Women and the Gospel**

Jewish-Christian Dialogues – Good Idea?

This article is about to head into dangerous territory. The question of Jewish-Christian dialogue does not lend itself to easy answers and is sure to offend people on both sides of this issue. However, this issue is a question that needs to be asked and must be answered.

On the surface, a dialogue between Christians and Jewish people seems like a wonderful idea. We after all have so much in common. The heroes of Judaism – David, Abraham, Moses – are heroes of the Christian faith. The reality that there is only one God (monotheism) is a required belief statement for both faiths.

However, there is often an obstacle which prevents real and productive dialogue between the Christian and Jewish faiths. The stumbling block is not an idea or a thing but a person, and His name is Jesus of Nazareth.

For you see, dialogue requires a measure of give and take and believers in Jesus cannot compromise on the reality or the exclusivity of His Messiahship. Jesus is either the Savior for all people, including and especially the Jewish people (Rom. 1:16), or He is the Redeemer of no one.

Evangelism is at the core of the Christian faith and cannot be compromised for the sake of dialogue. Jesus' last instruction to the disciples (Matt. 28:18-20; Acts 1:8) was to win the world. Believers in Jesus must be a mission-minded people or we have failed to live out our faith in Him.

So what should be discussed and debated among the Christian and Jewish faiths? What are some of the important dialogue issues that must be pondered? Here are a few possible suggestions:

1. **The Need to Combat Anti-Semitism.** Acts of vandalism and hatred against the Jewish people are on the rise around the world, especially in Europe. Christians must respond clearly and loudly against these awful actions. These deeds are a result of Satan's hatred against the Jewish people and they must be defeated.

2. **The Right of the Jewish People to the Land of Israel.** In the last few years many Christian denominations have passed resolutions condemning Israeli actions against terrorist incursions. Israel needs to know that there are many believers in Jesus who affirm not only Israel's right to existence but also its biblical ownership of the land (Gen. 12, 15, 17).

3. **The Reality of Jewish Believers in Jesus.** Of the three issues, this is, believe it or not, the most controversial. The perception that one cannot be Jewish and believe in Jesus has been accepted not only in Judaism but also in some areas of Christendom. Nothing could be further from the truth. Jewish believers should be welcomed at dialogues between Christian and Jewish groups. Jesus' Messiahship is a non-negotiable issue as is the reality that there are thousands of Jewish men and women who have come to faith in Him.

Now let the discussion and/or dialogue begin. We might be surprised by the results!

Orthodox Jewish Women & the Gospel

If 28% of the 6.5 million American Jewish population is Orthodox, then one could estimate that there is almost one million Orthodox Jewish women living in the USA. Just imagine what could happen if believers committed themselves to praying for and working towards reaching these women with the message that Jesus loves them?

The truth of Jesus' love for these women would be revolutionary, especially for a small but growing group of Orthodox Jewish women who are called **Agunah**. An **Agunah** is a woman forced to stay in a horrible marriage because her husband refuses to grant her a religious divorce. A woman can be granted a civil divorce but **unless** the husband initiates a religious divorce, she is considered as still married to him. If she remarries in a civil ceremony, she is considered an adulteress and any future children are viewed as illegitimate.

Please do not read this article in the wrong way, divorce is a sin and something to be avoided at all costs (Mal. 2:13-16). However, can you imagine how an Orthodox woman might view a religion who forces her to remain in an abusive marriage? Can you imagine how she might view God?

Jesus hates divorce (Matt. 19:1-9), but he loves the **Agunah** who sees herself as abandoned by everyone, including her faith. Please remember to pray for these hurting women, they need to know that someone cares. This is the time to reach out to these women with the truth that Jesus came to set all people free.

Part Two of the Article Will Appear in the April Issue

Ministry Calendar

January 10-11, 2006 – Ministry Display/Booth – BMAA Missions Symposium – Little Rock, Arkansas

January 19, 2006 – “Mothers of the Messiah” – Polk Co. District WMA, Livingston, Texas

January 29, 2006 – “Jesus in the Passover” – Shady Grove Baptist Church, DeBerry, Texas

March 18, 2006 – Jewish Evangelism Workshop – Heritage Baptist Church, Latham, New York

March 19, 2006 – “Personal Testimony” (a.m.) – Heritage Baptist Church, Latham, New York

April 8, 2006 – “Jesus in the Passover” – Red Springs Baptist Church, Tyler, Texas

April 9, 2006 – “Personal Testimony” (a.m.) – Red Springs Baptist Church, Tyler, Texas

April 9, 2006 – “Jesus in the Passover” (p.m.) – Sand Flat Baptist Church, Grand Saline, Texas

April 11, 2006 – “Mothers of the Messiah” – Harris Co. District WMA, Houston, Texas

April 12, 2006 – “Jesus in the Passover” – Southline Baptist Church, Cleveland, Texas

April 13, 2006 – “Jesus in the Passover” – Needham Road Baptist Church/The Church at 242, Conroe, Texas

COMING IN THE NEXT ISSUE ...

✧The Matzah Tash and the Trinity

✧Orthodox Jewish Women and the Gospel –
(Part 2 of a Two-Part Series)

✧Jewish College Students – The Forgotten
Group for Evangelism